

Exotics recipes

In the third episode of Grow Your Own Drugs, discover how aloe vera and marigold can be frozen and used to soothe burns; make an insect repellent from lemongrass, or a clay face mask from olive leaves. Finally, make a refreshing and cleansing mouthwash from green tea, liquorice and lemon.

Aloe Vera and Marigold Frozen Gel Cubes for Burns

2 mature fresh aloe vera leaves fresh marigold flowerheads (*Calendula officinalis*) drops lavender essential oil (1 drop per ice cube)

1. Peel the fresh aloe leaves to give you a gooey mass of gel.
2. Put into a blender with the marigold flowers and whizz until smooth.
3. Pour the gel into ice cube trays, adding a drop of lavender essential oil into each individual cube. Freeze until solid.

USE: Apply a cube directly to the affected area as needed. The ice cubes melt quickly to produce masses of fragrant soothing gel. Don't forget to have a paper towel or cloth handy to mop up the melted gel; the goo has a habit of going everywhere!

STORAGE: Will keep in the freezer for up to 6 months.

Lemongrass Insect Repellent

10 lemongrass sticks tsp scented pelargonium 'Citronella' leaves (about 15 leaves) tsp whole cloves ml sunflower oil, to cover

1. Wash and chop the lemongrass sticks and pelargonium leaves, and place both in a blender with the cloves. Add the oil, then whizz until pulped.
2. Place the pulp in a glass heat-proof bowl and cover. Put the bowl over a pan of boiling water on a low heat, making sure there are no gaps around the bowl, and leave for 1 hour. Keep checking that the pan does not boil dry.
3. Leave to cool, then strain the citrus-and spice-scented oil through muslin to remove all the fibrous bits, and store in a pump spray bottle.

USE: Shake the bottle well, then spray liberally onto skin up to 4 times a day, paying particular attention to exposed areas like ankles, wrists and neck, and avoiding the eyes. Re-apply after washing or bathing, and before bed.

CAUTION: If any irritation occurs, wash off immediately.

STORAGE: Will keep for up to 1 year in a cool dark place.

Antioxidant Olive Leaf Clay Mask

3-4 heaped tbsp fresh or dried olive leaves Boiling water, to cover tbsp clay powder drops lemon essential oil

1. Place the olive leaves in a pan, pour boiling water over to cover and simmer gently for 10 minutes.
2. Strain out the leaves and return the liquid to the heat, continuing to simmer until reduced by half (about 10 minutes). Measure out 80ml of the olive water.
3. Put the clay powder in a bowl. Pour the olive water slowly over the clay powder, stirring well, then stir in the lemon essential oil. Bottle.

USE: When cool, apply the mask to face, avoiding the eye area. Leave on for 20 minutes, then wash off with warm water. The mask can be applied once or twice a week, as needed. Wash off immediately if you get any redness or irritation.

STORAGE: Will keep for 6 months in the refrigerator.

Green Tea, Liquorice & Lemon Mouthwash

For the tincture: liquorice sticks tsp green tea leaves About 200ml vodka, or to cover

For the mouthwash: -4 tsp green tea leaves drops lemon essential oil tsp glycerine

To make the tincture: Peel the liquorice into shavings as you would a carrot, using a very sharp vegetable peeler. Combine with the first quantity of tea leaves (5 tsp) in a glass jar. Add enough vodka to cover the herbs completely. Cover and keep in a cool dark place for 10-14 days. Then strain the mixture, reserving the liquid.

To make the mouthwash: Using 2-4 tsp green tea leaves, make up a pot of green tea and leave to stand for 2-3 minutes. Strain a 200ml measure of the green tea, then pour this into the liquorice tincture to dilute it. (When you do this, the tea should be no hotter than 80-90°C/176-194°F - definitely not boiling.) Stir in the lemon essential oil and glycerine and bottle.

USE: Use as a mouthwash/gargle once a day as needed. Do not swallow.

CAUTION: Contains alcohol.

STORAGE: Will keep for 6 months in the refrigerator.